

American public. We should spend our resources, our surplus on things that we think are good for people rather than people voicing their opinion.

Then I started to think of the real overriding question, which is: Surplus? What are we all talking about? A surplus? There is \$5.7 trillion worth of debt. There is no surplus. There may be an excess cash to expenditures. But, clearly, there is no surplus.

But if we keep doing these things and paying money in all kinds of different accounts and different proposals, we will never balance the budget, and no American taxpayer will get any relief.

We sent money to Russia recently, I can remember, through the IMF, and nobody can account for the hundreds of millions of dollars that are residing in the bank accounts all over the world. The Russians never got helped by our cash. It went into the pockets of people who purloined the money and took it for their own use.

We keep saying to ourselves, well, we will do better next time. We will put some oversight panels together. We will look at the money and the expenditures. Yet, each time, we fall into the trap once again of saying we better add some more money to the appropriations bill because we have got to help out another one of our neighbors in trouble, a neighbor overseas.

Then I think when I ride around at night, how many homeless Vietnam veterans are probably on the streets of our Nation's capital, homeless Vietnam veterans who are going without health care, medical care of any kind because we cannot help them. They fought the good fight, but we have got too many other things on our plate.

We cannot sacrifice individual appropriations bills, because we are all trying to protect our reelections. We cannot make our government more fiscally sound because we are too interested in racking up totals that are mind boggling on their face.

Our interest payments are like \$247 billion a year on the debt we have now at \$5.7 trillion. So we will never get ahead if we continue this. But what about giving or, as the headline says, forgiving our debts. What about forgiving some of the debts that the American public has every day that they work and pay their taxes to help support this government, and we seem tone deaf to be able to turn our responsibilities directed towards them.

I say, pay down the debt. But I also say let us not start attacking the majority party here for being cheap as I heard last week. We did not recognize our responsibilities. So let us focus a little bit more on the American public, the American taxpayer, helping our own citizens, our community before we start giving money away abroad.

GOOD NEWS TONIGHT: BUDGET BALANCE WITHOUT TOUCHING SOCIAL SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COOKSEY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, Will Rogers used to say, "All I know is what I read in the newspapers." There was another commentator who used to start his news cast every night by saying, "This is good news tonight."

Mr. Speaker, there is good news tonight, perhaps the best news that we have had on the economy and the budget in a long, long time. There it is on page A18 of the New York Times. In fact, it appeared in newspapers all over the country today.

Let me read the first two paragraphs. "Something symbolically enormous may have happened today: the Congressional Budget Office announced that the Government may have balanced the budget in fiscal year 1999", that is the one we just finished, "without spending Social Security money."

"If so, it would be the first time that has happened since 1960, when Dwight Eisenhower was President, gentlemen sported felt fedoras and women wore fox stoles."

Mr. Speaker, this is truly great news. It is great news for all generations. What this really means, it means a more secure retirement for our parents. It means a much stronger economy for baby boomers and folks who are working. But, most importantly, it means a brighter future for our kids.

This is just a blow up of that article that appears in the New York Times, but it is written all over. It is a great story.

I want to come back to something and show my colleagues where we were just a few years ago. Because I think to understand the importance and the significance of this, we sort of have to look at where we were.

This is what the Congressional Budget Office was predicting just a few years ago with what was going to be happening in terms of the Social Security deficit projections. We were looking, in 1999, at a deficit of \$90 billion. We were going in the wrong direction. So the American people said enough is enough. We have got to change course.

So what we did is we began to gradually reduce the growth in Federal spending. We have cut the rate of growth in Federal spending by more than half. As a result, today, we not only have a balanced budget ahead of schedule, but we believe, for the first time since Dwight Eisenhower was President, we actually have a balanced budget without stealing from Social Security.

Now that we have crossed this Rubicon, I think we have to make it clear that we are not going to turn back. If

we are going to do that, I think we have really only several alternatives. One thing, of course, we can always do is raise taxes. There are more than enough of our friends on the left who believe that that is really the answer in terms of balancing our budget long-term.

The second, of course, is we could turn our backs on Social Security. We can begin to steal from Social Security again. We believe that is the wrong course.

The only other real alternative we have in terms of balancing the budget and saving Social Security would be to cut spending.

Now, in the next couple of days, we are probably going to be faced with that simple choice: Are we going to raise taxes? Are we going to steal from Social Security? Are we going to cut spending?

I happen to believe that the third option is the only one that the American people will accept. I also happen to believe that the fairest way to cut that spending would be across the board.

Our leadership and people on the Committee on Appropriations are working on a plan whereby we would cut spending 1 percent across the board. I think that is the fairest thing to do. I think that is what the American people want us to do.

As I say, after wandering in the wilderness of deficit spending, of enormous deficits, including borrowing from Social Security for 40 years, we have finally crossed the River Jordan. Now that we have, we have it within our power to make certain and make it clear to future generations that we are not going back.

HATE CRIMES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, 1 year ago, a mother in Wyoming received news that tragically changed her life forever. Her son, an openly gay University of Wyoming student, was kidnapped, robbed, beaten, and burned by two male assailants. Left exposed to the elements, latched to a ranch fence for 18 hours, the young man Matthew Shepard died at a local hospital 6 days later. He lost his life as a result of bigotry and hate.

One year later, we stand on the House floor empty handed, unable to provide any real comfort to the mothers and fathers of the Matthew Shapards of our Nation. One year later, we stand on the House floor to mourn the death of Matthew, yet, failed to honor his life in any meaningful way. One year later, we are working to ensure that the Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 1999 becomes the law of the land, yet a real threat exists that we may not succeed.

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Mr. Speaker, it is not fair to the families of America. It is not fair to the families who have lost a loved one as a result of hate. It is not fair for these families to have to wait for Congress to recognize their need and honor the lives of the loved ones they lost. It is not fair for Congress to remain silent while these programs loudly demand action.

Hate can occur in any community. In Jasper, Texas, three white men dragged a 49-year-old black man for two miles while he was chained to the back of a pickup truck. In Ft. Campbell, Kentucky, a 21-year-old Private First Class was brutally beaten with a baseball bat in his barracks because he was gay.

In my district over the Fourth of July weekend, hate erupted with a vengeance. A madman full of rage and with a gun took the life of two men and forever changed the lives of many families.

This madman left us grieving for Ricky Byrdsong and his family and Woo-Joon Yoon, an Asian student from Bloomington, Indiana, and angry for the assault on Jewish men peacefully observing the Sabbath.

Ricky Byrdsong lived in Skokie, Illinois, in my district. He was a loving husband, a father, a leader in the community, a former basketball coach at Northwestern University, a man of deep religious faith, and a constituent. He was murdered in cold blood. His only crime was the color of his skin. He was African-American.

Many skeptics say we do not need this bill. But tell that to the family of Ricky Byrdsong or Matthew Shepard.

I urge my House colleagues on the Commerce-State-Justice Conference Committee to agree to include the hate crimes prevention act in the final bill. We must expand and improve the Federal hate crimes law and punish those who choose their victims based on race or gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or physical disability.

It would also make it easier for Federal law enforcement officials to investigate and prosecute cases of racial and religious violence.

State and local authorities currently prosecute the majority of hate crimes and will continue to do so under this legislation. Keeping the Hate Crimes Prevention Act in the appropriations bill will increase Federal jurisdiction to allow Federal officials to assist State and local authorities to investigate and prosecute hate crimes. It will also provide State and local programs with grants designed to combat hate crimes committed by juveniles.

While serving in the Illinois State House, my colleagues and I were successful in strengthening State laws dealing with hate crimes. I am looking forward to working with my colleagues here in the Congress to translate successes on the State level to the national stage.

The Hate Crimes Prevention Act is such an opportunity to send a clear and powerful message that the safety of all people is a priority and anyone who threatens that safety will face the consequences.

As a Member of Congress who represents one of the most diverse districts in the Nation, I strongly believe that we must ensure the passage of this act. Hate crimes if left unchecked not only victimize our citizens but debase and shame us all.

SENATE MESSAGE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate agrees to the report of the Committee of Conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 1906) "An Act making appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2000, and for other purposes."

HATE CRIMES PREVENTION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1082, the Hate Crimes Prevention Act.

In August, the House Committee on the Judiciary, on which I sit, held a hearing on hate crimes. We heard testimony from Carole Carrington. I am sure my colleagues are familiar with her story.

Her daughter, granddaughter, and a dear family friend were murdered in Yosemite National Park last February. The murderer was finally captured a few months later after brutally murdering another woman near Yosemite.

Why did this man kill these four women? Because they were women. He claims to have fantasized about killing women for the last 30 years. He did not know any of his victims. He targeted them simply because they were women.

Mr. Speaker, this great Nation was founded on the desire for freedom, freedom from oppression, freedom from religious persecution, freedom to participate as full citizens.

Our Nation's founding principles revolve around the concept of individual liberties and the freedom to live our lives in a free and open society. We have long recognized that personal safety and security are essential for a person to exercise the rights and obligations of citizenship.

Governments are created by men and women in part to protect and defend citizens from violence to ensure that they are able to exercise their personal liberties.

Hate crimes are intended to intimidate the victim and to limit those free-

doms. Hate crimes are designed by the perpetrators to create fear in the victim. The woman who was attacked on a dark street lives in fear of another attack. The African-American family that has a cross burned on their lawn remembers that threat far after the scorch marks on the grass have been washed away. The gay teenager who is beaten by classmates may never feel safe in school again.

Hate crimes are meant to instill fear. And the fear that hate crimes instill is not simply targeted at the immediate victim. The fear is aimed at members of the group. Hate crimes are different than any other violent crime because they seek to terrorize an entire community, be it burning a cross in someone's yard, the burning of a synagogue, or a rash of gay bashings.

This sort of domestic terrorism demands a strong Federal response because this country was founded on the premise that a person should be free to be who they are without fear of violence.

A member of the other body, the Republican chairman of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary, said, "A crime committed not just to harm an individual but out of a motive of sending a message of hatred to an entire community is appropriately punished more harshly, or in a different manner, than other crimes."

I do not know for sure what causes hate. I am sure the expert have some ideas. But fear of the unknown combined with stereotyping of groups that reinforces that fear probably has something to do with it.

I know that hate crime legislation cannot cure the hate that still resides among some in our country, but this legislation can provide more protections for groups who are targeted and send an important message that Congress believes that hate crimes against any group are a serious national problem that deserves to be addressed.

One year ago, a young University of Wyoming student, Matthew Shepard, was brutally murdered because he was gay. We all know the story. But Matthew's murder had a profound personal impact on me. It reminded me that I could be targeted simply because of who I am.

It was at the height of my campaign when they found Matthew's body. The word spread quickly among my many university student volunteers, and I could see the hurt and fear in their eyes as they talked about what happened to this young university student, a person their age.

A number of my volunteers were gay or lesbian and they were in shock. It affected so many of us profoundly and personally.

Hate crimes are an attack on society, an attack on tolerance, an attack on freedom. This Congress ought to act swiftly to pass the Hate Crimes Prevention Act.